

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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R 280935Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 125

INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 15156

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJECT: SUHARTO AGREES TO MEET WITH STUDENTS; CALLS FOR
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

REF: JAKARTA 15043

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT SUHARTO HAS AGREED TO HOLD A
"DIALOGUE" WITH STUDENT LEADERS AT THEIR REQUEST AS AN
INDICATION OF HIS INTEREST IN "TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION"
BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC. HE HAS ALSO ASKED FOR
MAXIMUM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND EXPRESSION OF VIEWS IN
CONNECTION WITH GOVERNMENT'S CONSIDERATION OF NEW
BUDGET AND DRAFT SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN. SUHARTO'S
WILLINGNESS TO MEET STUDENTS AND HIS PERSONAL CALL
FOR *NCREASED COMMUNICATION IS LATEST PHASE IN
GOVERNMENT'S EFFORT TO PLACATE ANTI-GOVERNMENT DISCONTENT.
FOLLOWING BASED ON PRESS REPORTS DECEMBER 28. END SUMMARY

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. FOLLOWING CABINET SESSION
DECEMBER 27, GOI SPOKESMAN MASHURI ANNOUNCED TO REPORTERS
THAT PRESIDENT SUHARTO HAS AGREED TO MEET AND DISCUSS
CURRENT ISSUES WITH TWELVE STUDENT COUNCIL LEADERS
REPRESENTING UNIVERSITIES IN JAKARTA, BANDUNG AND BOGOR.
THE PRESIDENT WAS RESPONDING TO DEMAND FOR SUCH A/
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MEETING BY A LARGE STUDENT GROUP WHICH CALLED AT HIS

OFFICE AND HOME ON DECEMBER 24 IN UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO SEE HIM (REFTEL). (SUHARTO WAS OUT OF TOWN BUT STUDENTS THREATENED TO DEMONSTRATE IN GREATER NUMBERS IF THE PRESIDENT REFUSED TO RECEIVE THEM AFTER HIS RETURN. U. OF INDONESIA STUDENT COUNCIL LEADER HARRIMAN SIREGAR REPEATED THIS THREAT IN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN BERITA BUANA DECEMBER 27 BEFORE SUHARTO ANNOUNCED HE WOULD RECEIVE THE STUDENTS. SIREGAR SAID THE STUDENTS HAD FACTS ABOUT CORRUPTION BY HIGH OFFICIALS THAT THEY WISHED TO PRESENT DIRECTLY TO SUHARTO.)

2. MASHURI SAID SUHARTO'S WILLINGNESS TO MEET STUDENTS IS EXAMPLE OF POLICY OF OPENNESS AND TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION THAT PRESIDENT HAS CALLED FOR. HE PRAISED "DYNAMISM" OF YOUNGER GENERATION, BUT REMARKED THAT IT SHOULD BE CHANNELLED THROUGH REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRADITIONS OF DISCUSSION AND CONSENSUS.

3. MASHURI STRESSED THAT SUHARTO'S MEETING WITH STUDENTS WOULD NOT BE A PRECEDENT FOR REGULAR MEETINGS, AND WAS NOT AN EFFORT TO END-RUN THE PARLIAMENT AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS. WHEN JOURNALISTS NOTED STUDENT DISAFFECTION WITH REGULAR INSTITUTIONS HE ACKNOWLEDGED IT WAS NORMAL FOR YOUTH TO BE IMPATIENT.

4. MASHURI SAID THE PRESIDENT WOULD PROBABLY RECEIVE THE STUDENTS SOME TIME AFTER JANUARY 7, WHEN HE WILL DELIVER HIS ANNUAL BUDGET ADDRESS AND, BEFORE JANUARY 14, WHEN PRIME MINISTER TANAKA IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE.

5. MASHURI ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT IN CONNECTION WITH DISCUSSIONS AT DECEMBER 27 CABINET SESSION OF 74/75 BUDGET AND SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN (REPELITA II), SUHARTO INSTRUCTED ALL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES TO "OPEN THEIR DOORS AS WIDE AS POSSIBLE" TO PUBLIC OPINION. MASHURI SAID PRESIDENT WANTS MAXIMUM PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT, AND EXPECTS TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC FOR THIS PURPOSE VIA MASS MEDIA, INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATIONS, AND REPRESENTATIVE

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INSTITUTIONS. END UNCLASSIFIED.

6. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: SUHARTO'S WILLINGNESS TO MEET STUDENTS IN RESPONSE TO THEIR NUEMAND AND HIS PERSONAL ENCOURAGEMENT OF GREATER PUBLIC EXPRESSION AT A TIME OF INCREASINGLY PROVOCATIVE YOUTH PROTEST ARE CONFIRMATION OF TOP LEVEL DECISION TO PURSUE CONCILIATORY APPROACH AS MEANS OF CURBING YOUTH

PROTEST AND MODERATING DISCONTENT.
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